



Today, the idea of a coffee house usually brings to mind a cozy place that serves gourmet coffee and espresso drinks, with couches to lounge in while you sip. So how did the coffee house get its start?

Today, I'm looking back through time to see where the coffee house started, and how much its changed (or hasn't changed?)

The first record of a public place serving coffee dates back to 1475. Kiva Han was the name of the first coffee shop, located in the Turkish city of Constantinople (now Istanbul). Coffee was such an important item during that time period, that it was legal in Turkey for a woman to divorce her husband if he could not supply her with enough coffee. Turkish coffee was served strong, black and unfiltered, usually brewed in an ibrik. The idea of doctoring up one's coffee with cream and sweeteners, came into fashion in Europe around 1529, when the first coffee house in Europe was established. Vienna was invaded by the Turkish army, who left many bags of coffee behind when they fled the city. Franz Georg Kolschitzky claimed the

coffee as the spoils of war, and opened a coffee house. Apparently, he had lived in Turkey and was the only person who recognized the value in the beans. He introduced the idea of filtering coffee, as well as the softening the brew with milk and sugar. The beverage was quite a hit, and when coffee houses also started serving sweet pastries and other confectionary treats, their popularity exploded.

Coffee establishments continued to spread, with the first one opening up in Britain in 1652. Though its popularity was growing in Europe, the idea arrived in England again from Turkey. An English merchant who dealt in Turkish goods (such as coffee) had two of his servants leave him, to go into business for themselves. "The Turk's Head" coffee house was born.

It was in an English coffee house that the word "tips" was first used for gratuities. A jar with a sign reading, "To Insure Prompt Service" sat on the counter. You put a coin in the jar to be served quickly.

The British called their coffee houses, "penny universities" because that was the price for the coffee and the social upper-class of business-men were found there. In fact, a small coffee shop run by Edward Lloyd in 1668 was such a business hub, it eventually became the still-operating Lloyd's of London insurance company.

From there, the idea spread further through Europe. Italy in 1654 and then Paris in 1672. Germany embraced the coffee house for the first time in 1673.

When America was colonized, the coffee house was quick to follow. The role of the American coffee house was the same as those in England: the hotspots for the business community. The Tontine Coffee House (1792) in New York was the original location for the New York Stock Exchange.

,Until now, coffee houses were serving regular coffee. Then came espresso. In 1946, Gaggia invented the commercial piston espresso machine, which was far easier to use and safer than earlier models. The Gaggia coffee bar, in Italy, was the first location to use these machines and to offer espresso along with the regular coffee. The modern age of coffee houses was born.

Of course, the age-old coffee house should not be confused with the coffee shop of recent decades. Coffee shops are really restaurants that serve a typical menu of diner food, along with basic coffee. Tim Horton's is a good example of a popular coffee shop that has somewhat transcended the basic 'diner' and though they serve a wide menu of food, they are known across the country for their excellent coffee. Even so, I wouldn't class them as a coffee house because they don't serve espresso or any espresso-based drinks.

And who could forget the most popular and wide-spread coffee house of them all, Starbucks. They opened their first store in 1971, in Seattle and have taken the world by storm with more than 8,000 locations.

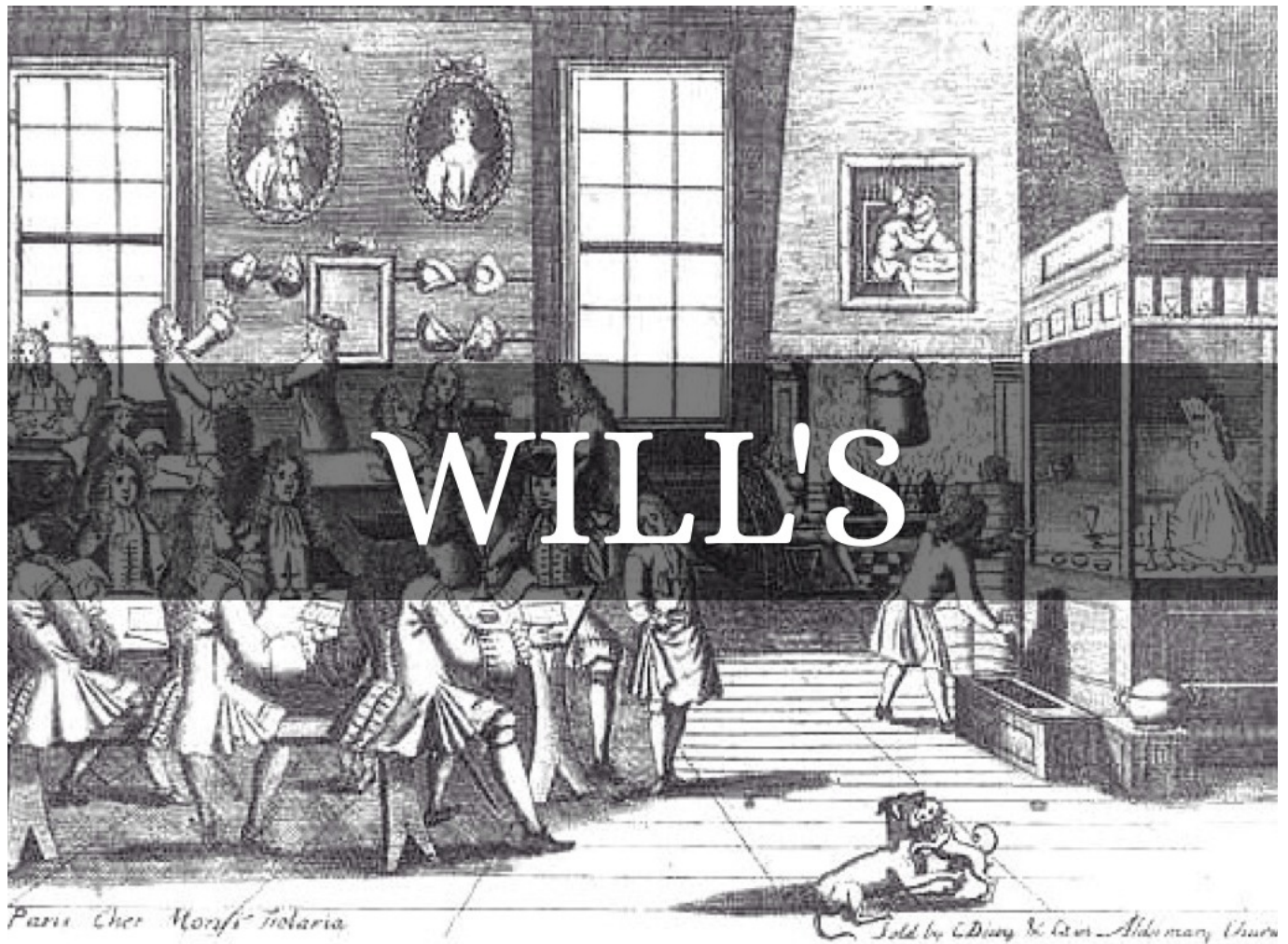
Whether you prefer the wide-spread chains, or the local independent coffee house, you're taking a step into a long history of coffee each time you stop for a latte.



COFFEE HOUSES IN LONDON

The most important coffee houses in london's story

During the 18th century a new active culture evolved. Coffee Houses sprang up all over London and attracted a variety of patrons. The crowd at coffee houses included doctors, merchants, writers, and politicians. Besides taverns, coffee houses were the first place for people to meet and talk about different issues. Runners were sent from coffee house to coffee house in order to relay information on major events of the day. They became a hub of news and inevitably a place where new ideas were formed.



Will's was indisputably the most famous coffee house of the century. It was owned by William Urwin and situated in one of the most stylish parts of London on Russell Street in Covent Garden. One of the reasons for the popularity of this particular coffee house was its regular visits from John Dryden the English poet and dramatist . Dryden sat at a principal table when he went to Will's and was rarely approached by younger gentleman who thought it a privilege to get a pinch from his snuff-box.

The inside of Will's probably looked somewhat like the picture to the right of Lloyd's coffee house. Instead of sitting in boxes, as done later, people gathered at tables set up around the room. Smoking was so fashionable at the time that it was too popular to be prohibited.



THE GRECIAN

The Grecian was situated in Devereux Court and was known as a meeting place for the "Learned Club" and people "adjacent to the law". A famous violent incident occurred at this coffee house when an argument over the pronunciation of a particular Greek word resulted in a horrible fight.. One man even ran his sword through the door . Another source indicates that the Grecian was also a place where men could pick up prostitutes in the dark alleyways (The Devereux)



Turk's Head coffeehouse (image at right) bore the same name as numerous coffee houses and clubs. One located in Westminster was known for the debates that were held inside. Groups of people would come to discuss politics, literature, and many other controversial topics. Another coffee house known as Turk's Head sold what seems to be gourmet coffees of the time, chocolate, and tea .

The Rainbow, set up on Fleet street around 1652 was most likely the second coffee house in the city of London. Its owner, James Farr had been a mere barber before successfully opening

The Rainbow and his neighbors seemed disturbed to see his rise to fortune (this coffee house contained a bay window where the older gentleman sat and a large dining room.



The coffee house that Edward Lloyd opened in 1687 near the Thames on Tower Street was a favourite haunt of men from the ships that moored at London's docks. The house was "spacious, well built and inhabited by able tradesmen" according to a contemporary publication. It grew so popular that in 1691 Lloyd moved it to much larger and more luxurious quarters on Lombard Street. Nat Ward, a publican whom Alexander Pope accused of trading vile rhymes for tobacco, reported that the tables in the new house were "very neat and shined with rubbing." A staff of five served tea and sherbet as well as coffee.

Lloyd had grown up under Oliver Cromwell and he had lived through plague, fire, the Dutch invasion up the Thames in 1667, and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. He was a lot more than a skilled coffeehouse host. Recognizing the value of his customer base and responding to the insistent demand for information, he launched "Lloyd's List" in 1696 and filled it with information on the arrivals and departures of ships and intelligence on conditions abroad and at sea. That information was provided by a network of correspondents in major ports on the

Continent and in England. Ship auctions took place regularly on the premises, and Lloyd obligingly furnished the paper and ink needed to record the transactions. One corner was reserved for ships' captains where they could compare notes on the hazards of all the new routes that were opening up - routes that led them farther east, farther south, and farther west than ever before. Lloyd's establishment was open almost around the clock and was always crowded.



Then as now, anyone who was seeking insurance would go to a broker, who would then hawk the risk to the individual risk-takers who gathered in the coffee houses or in the precincts of the Royal Exchange. When a deal was closed, the risk-taker would confirm his agreement to cover the loss in return for a specified premium by writing his name under the terms of the contract; soon these one-man insurance operators came to be known as "underwriters". *

Lloyd's coffee house served from the start as the headquarters for marine underwriters, in large part because of its excellent mercantile and shipping connections. "Lloyd's List" was eventually enlarged to provide daily news on stock prices, foreign markets, and high-water times at London Bridge, along with the usual notices of ship arrivals and departures and reports of accidents and sinkings. This publication was so well known that its correspondents sent their messages to the post office addressed simply "Lloyd's." The government even used "Lloyd's List" to publish the latest news of battles at sea. *

In 1771, nearly a hundred years after Edward Lloyd opened his coffee house on Tower Street, seventy-nine of the underwriters who did business at Lloyd's subscribed £100 each and joined together in the Society of Lloyd's, an unincorporated group of individual entrepreneurs operating under a self-regulated code of behavior. These were the original Members of Lloyd's; later, members came to be known as "Names." The Names committed all their worldly possessions and all their financial capital to secure their promise to make good on their customers' losses. That commitment was one of the principal reasons for the rapid growth of business underwritten at Lloyd's over the years. And thus did Canopus's cup of coffee lead to the establishment of the most famous insurance company in history.



The long 18th century, from the Glorious Revolution until Waterloo, was the period in which Britain rose to a dominant position among European trading empires, and became the first western nation to industrialise.

The extent of economic change between 1688 and 1815 can be discerned through a glimpse at the state of economic and social conditions at home, and the growth of trade and empire at the beginning and end of that period.

In 1688 England and Wales had a population of 4.9 million, and the internal economy was still largely based on agricultural work and production.

Domestic industry flourished, with many workers pursuing dual occupations on a seasonal basis in industry and agriculture. English society contained a flourishing and more extensive middling sector than any other western country, including the Dutch Republic. This provided

a strong platform for commerce with, and settlement in, far-flung territories.

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Merchants sent out ships to trade with North America and the West Indies, where England had established a network of colonies, following on from the permanent settlement of Virginia in 1607 and the acquisition of Barbados in 1625. Some 350,000 people had emigrated from England across the Atlantic by the end of the 17th century.

In 1686 alone these colonies shipped goods worth over £1 million to London. Exports to the colonies consisted mainly of woollen textiles; imports included sugar, tobacco and other tropical groceries for which there was a growing consumer demand.

The triangular slave trade had begun to supply these Atlantic colonies with unfree African labour, for work on tobacco, rice and sugar plantations. It was based around the activities of the Royal African Company, with headquarters in London.

Trade and settlement also occurred in Asian waters. This was mainly based around the activities of the East India Company, a large joint-stock company based in London. The ships of the East India Company fleet traded mainly in bullion, textiles and tea with Bengal.

Overseas commerce was conducted within the mercantilist framework of the Navigation Acts, which stipulated that all commodity trade should take place in British ships, manned by British seamen, trading between British ports and those within the empire.

Despite these developments, in 1688 Britain was still a vulnerable competitor for stakes in overseas colonies and trade - her rivals were the trading empires of France and the Netherlands, as well as Spain and her client state, Portugal.

